

THE PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
TO HIS HOLINESS THE POPE
2, Via Boncompagni

Rome, September 18, 1944.

My dear Mr. President:

For your entertainment, I am sending herewith translation of a series of articles on the madness of Mussolini and the Diary of Ciano, that have particular reference to "how Italy entered the war". I believe it will refresh your recollection of many events in which we were both interested in that moment.

With kind regards, believe me

Sincerely yours,



Myron C. Taylor

Enclosure:

Translation.

The President

The White House,

Washington.

COPY

The Diary of Ciano
THE MADNESS OF MUSSOLINI
HOW ITALY ENTERED IN WAR

"The Italian people must revenge the death of my husband. And if they do not do so - I will do it with my own hands".

This was the last message that Countess Edda Ciano sent to her father Mussolini from Switzerland.

In reality the Italian people have many deaths to revenge and therefore can not think of revenging Count Ciano's, however horrible his end seemed to have been.

Countess Ciano further writes to her father: "And do not hope that You or Your friends can rob me of my husband's diary, because it will be useless to try, as I have made seven copies, which are deposited in seven different cities."

What kind of a diary is it, that Mussolini would like to tear out of his daughter's hands? and which the daughter defends so tenaciously? It is the most serious and terrible document of accusation held against Mussolini.

I happen to know quite a good part of that diary, maybe the most important part that it contains. Count Ciano read it to me himself. I will therefore relate what I know, and I must do it right now - and not later. And I ask the "Risorgimento Liberale" kindly to publish following statement: "It was a strange happening. It was during the first days of August last year - about a week after the State Collapse - that a certain person looked me up and asked me if I would have any difficulty in meeting with Count Ciano. I was surprised...

surprised at his question, because up to that moment I had only met the X. foreign secretary but once. I replied that I would have no difficulty whatsoever, but wished to know why I was supposed to see him. My friend then told me that Ciano intended to entrust some documents to me. Evidently he wanted to make a testimony for himself for future use, and this testimony could - for different reasons not be given to an official journalist connected with the government. He urged me to accept the appointment and the following day at five o'clock in the afternoon, I entered the house of Count Ciano.

CONTRADICTING DECISIONS

The Count received me very courteously and after exchanging a few words as to the present situation, which could be considered extremely unstable, he opened up a safe and drew forth some large papers saying: "This is my diary, I will read it to You. Where do You want me to begin? Is it alright if I start from August in 1939?". As I replied that I would be pleased, the Count began to read. He had only read a few pages when he cut short the reading and turned to me, looking me into the face. I think my readers will understand my great amazement at the Count's words: "I ask You not to make any comments. Surely, that which I have to say will make a most odd impression upon You".

I listened with great interest as the Count read. That diary was not so much a political document as a psychological one. In the summer of 1939 Mussolini was almost completely mad: this according to the testimony of his relative. If he had been in this state for any length of time, I cannot tell, but it is probable, because the illness was already in
year

year 1939 considerably developed.

A certain day Bocchini paid Ciano a visit and secretly confided to him: "It is necessary that the family of the "DUCE" persuade him to take another anti-lzetic cure. He is in a state of constant agitation and it is not possible for me to talk to him." Ciano's reply was: "I am in the same predicament as You."

From the day of the outbreak of the war in Europe, Mussolini wavered from one decision to another. One day he decidedly wanted to declare war - another day he wished to remain in peace - a third day he was on the verge of declaring war immediately - and the fourth day he decided to wait another two years. Each day he changed his mind, sometimes without reason and sometimes for the most trifling reasons.

Two English newspapers had commented: that the reason for Italy's decision for not entering the war was perfectly logical, as it was impossible for Italy to declare war, unprepared as the country was. Mussolini became enraged: "I can't make war?" he raged - "I want to make it at once!" Thus - that which the public had always perceived came true, Mussolini was capable of taking the most serious decisions, because of trifles. He would declare war after seeing a caricature, or after reading an article in a newspaper. This is confirmed in the diary written by the one, who was his most intimate co-worker.

Many of the minor personalities in the Fascist Party which appeared in the diary, always gave more or less bad advice to the mad man. General Pariani assured that the army was in perfect order and therefore could make war with

clear...

clear conscience. Ciano commented this with: "He is a liar and a traitor." The quadruplex De Vecchi wanted the war, and Ciano commented: "to have other honours and other medals." Count Grandi also urged for the war.

The Occupation of Norway

Thaon de Revel showed Ciano a very strange Finance theory, which probably had already been laid before Mussolini. "And it is true", he said, "that our financial position is not flourishing, and that our gold-reserves are soon finished, but therefore there is no reason for worry: the gold is of no importance whatsoever now: it is the work that counts - and we can therefore calmly enter the war."

It was at the end of March 1940 - if I remember right March 26th, that Mussolini took his final decision. Nothing had happened. That day Mussolini on leaving his office, met Ciano. As he saw him, he lifted his finger and pointing to Ciano's face, he said: "Germany will win the war. You must get that into Your heads, all of You, beginning with You, and work according to that basis."

And from that day, there was not one moment of hesitation. He marched towards the abyss with resolute steps and with the stubbornness of a crazed mule.

It was at the time of the occupation of Norway, that Mussolini's disturbed mentality reached its height and developed into a state of perfect madness. In the night of April 9 - 10th, 1940 at four o'clock, Ciano was called to the telephone. It was the Ambassador of Germany, von Mackensen. "I must, he said, at once deliver a message of utmost importance to "Il Duce", will You please accompany

me."...

me?"

Half an hour later Mackensen was at the house of Ciano and together they went to see Mussolini. Mackensen immediately delivered the message, quoting: "In the night at five o'clock German troops will be disembarking in Norway and will also at the same hour occupy the frontier of Denmark. 'The Führer' wished the Duce to be informed at once." Maybe the landing-operations had already commenced at the very moment when Mackensen delivered his message. Mussolini received the news with an outburst of enthusiasm. "Splendid", he cried, "that is the way to make war!" And he instructed Mackensen to express his congratulations and admiration to the Führer. But - the following days, as the German undertaking seemed to be developing in their favour, Mussolini became more and more discontented and nervous. He was tormented by a foolish envy, due to Hitler's "Glory". And at last, when the German victory seemed sure, he wired the Italian Ambassador in Berlin Attolico, and ordered him to visit Hitler and advise him, in the name of Mussolini, to content himself with the victory in Norway and avoid further attacks in the West. He considered himself the man to give such advice to Hitler! And he thought that Hitler would ever listen to similar suggestions!

The latter sent Mussolini a courteous reply - and continued on his own way. Meanwhile Mussolini no more hesitated, but marched stubbornly towards war. The efforts, which had been made from various parties to prevent him from entering into war, were all in vain, and had no other effect upon him, than to rouse his stubborn contradiction. The French offers were received by him with disregard. In exchange for the

Italian...

Italian neutrality the French Government declared itself willing to discuss matters on this basis: No concessions for Corsica or any other French Metropolitan parts, possibility of arrangements for Tunis and Gibuti. Ciano commented in his diary: "other things are wanted! They have not yet understood that Mussolini wants - the war."

REYNAUD'S MESSAGE

Paul Reynaud made an extreme effort: he sent a personal message to Mussolini. François Poncet handed it over to Ciano in a sealed envelope. He never read it, nor was informed as to its contents. He merely got the instructions from Mussolini a few days later to communicate with François Poncet and inform him that the message was not acceptable. Ciano commented Mussolini would avoid partaking in the war in one case only: if Hitler should cease fighting. A few days later Count Ciano had two dramatic conversations with the Ambassador of Great Britain, as well as the French Ambassador. It was in the month of May and France was already on her knees after the German assault. François Poncet's face was lined with the sufferings of his country. He knew that Ciano was against the war. And at a certain moment he threw all diplomatic reserve away, saying: "The Germans are intolerable masters. Even You will find that out." And his prophecy came true.

There were quite a few unpleasant incidents in those days. The walls of Rome were papered with ugly manifests of Fascist propaganda. Some British subjects were overtaken by the Fascists, as they tried to remove the manifests, and were punished by being mistreated. Sir Percy Lorraine

presented...

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presented himself immediately at the Chigi Palace and made an official protest. Ciano tried to justify the government, but Sir Percy was not satisfied and insisted that his protest be taken seriously. At last Ciano became impatient and said: "that it was not the moment to take such trifles tragically, when the air "buzzed" with matters that were much more serious." Sir Percy Lorraine slightly paled at these words, but after gaining control of himself, he answered: "well - if our fate must be decided with the point of the sword, may it be so, but remember that Great Britain is in the habit of winning her wars!" England - at that moment was without an army and without weapons, at its side it had a dying ally and it fought for one thing only: "to survive".

THE FATAL HOUR

The fatal hour drew near. Mussolini had already decided to intervene, but constantly avoided to set the date for his participation in the war. At times he seemed inclined to enter the war immediately - and then again he would postpone it another two or three weeks. At last he set the date for June 15th. That is, if Hitler would not find it necessary to postpone it. But the situation at the French front hastened the course of matters and Mussolini, fearing that he would come too late, once more changed his mind and set the date for Italy's entering into the war to June 10th. Ciano had instructions to meet with the English and French Ambassadors and to read to them Italy's declaration of war. The first to arrive at Chigi Palace was François Poncet. Count Ciano received the French Ambassador with a depressed look on his face. He said: "Perhaps You have guessed...

guessed the reason for this meeting?" François Poncet smiled a sad little smile and replied: "I am not very intelligent, but I gather that I have guessed the reason." He continued: "Permit me, however, to pronounce a wish in this moment; that in spite of the outbreking war, there will not be a bottomless gulf between us. I have a feeling that our ways once more will cross." Thereafter Count Ciano read the war declaration and the Ambassador took his leave. Sir Percy Lorraine then made his entry. Count Ciano announced that he must read him the war declaration. Sir Percy did not whimper. His only words were: "A pencil, please." Ciano commenced reading and Sir Percy made notes on a sheet of paper. When finished he folded the sheet in four and placed it into his pocket. Then he said: "I have a personal request to You Count." Ciano made a sign that he was at his disposal, and Sir Percy continued "I have a mule which I am very fond of, would You take care of it for me?" Ciano replied that he was willing to do so. At this Sir Percy expressed his gratitude and walking to the door he once more shook hands with Ciano and left. Reaching this part of the reading, I interrupted Count Ciano by asking: "And what happened to the mule?" "I do not know." "How is it that You don't know? Did You not give the mule care?" "Well! It was cared for about fifteen days, then I gave it to Starace and he in his turn handed it over to a Gendarmery-riding school and since then I have heard nothing more about it." It seemed to me that Count Ciano did not realize having given no less than a word of honour.

PORFIRIO

THE DIARY OF CIANO

HOW THE IRON-PACT WAS SIGNED

II

I have already related that part of the diary, which was read to me by Count Ciano. I will now go back a little and tell how I happened to make the acquaintance of Count Ciano.

As I for a very long time had not had the occasion of reading a single American or English newspaper, I happened to think of the Foreign Ministry, where all foreign newspapers were kept on file. The superintendent of that department told me, that there would be no difficulty whatsoever in my reading the papers as much as I wished, but on one condition only: that I would obtain the permission of the Minister. At that - there was nothing else to do than to apply to Count Ciano - whom - I until that moment had never met.

Fascist Propaganda

Count Ciano received me with the utmost courtesy, and as soon as I had informed him of the character of my visit, he gave me the permission to read all the papers and magazines, which I desired. At this promise, I rose to leave, but he detained me by saying, that he had reserved three quarters of an hour, because he wished to discuss a few things with me. I was very much surprised at this request, because usually journalists like to hear the opinions of ministers - and not the contrary. But I said: "I notice that You read quite a few newspapers?" He replied that he followed the press with great attention. I wondered a bit ironically, if he found anything of interest in our papers.

At this....

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At this, he replied: "Many more interesting reports than many of our ministers can produce." I watched him with great surprise. "That what You say is a very serious thing in regard to our diplomacy." He smiled, saying "I did certainly not refer to the articles of Gayda. They are it seems, not even worth reading." "And why do You make him write them then?" "Certainly I don't". "I do not wish to contradict You, but permit me to remind You, that Gayda recently published an article, where he supported the idea that Italy ought to have half of Africa, from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean. A similar article must have been inspired, if not directly dictated, by no other than Your Ministry." He answered to this with indignation: "I have never inspired nor authorized such extravagances. That article was one of Gayda's personal articles. After reading it, I felt very bad about it and found it deplorable." "Allow me to make two observations: In the first place, an official journalist has no right whatsoever to permit himself such a "personal initiative" - and if he does - the day after the publication of such an article, he can no longer be considered an official journalist.

In the second place: All the papers receive their instructions from the Board of Education to publish articles of mentioned kind. Therefore the initiative was taken by the Board of Education (the Ministry) and not by Gayda. "You are wrongly informed. It is not true." "I can assure You that it is true." "It is not true. I can give You my word as to that." I remained silent and stupefied. But in that moment everything seemed to reveal itself; the vast disorganization of the Fascist propaganda. The Minister of the Board of Education, Pavolini, had probably grasped

some...

some of Mussolini's phrases, and in the belief that he would merit himself, forwarded instructions to the press, but evidently these instructions were given without the knowledge of the Foreign Minister, who knew nothing about it until he read the papers. When Ciano then protested, Pavolini denied having given instructions assuring that Gayda and the other papers had written the articles on their own personal initiative. As it was, the discussions regarding the press and the diplomacy were ended - and I was quietly expecting the Minister to question me. After a few moments of silence, he asked me, what I thought of the situation. I hesitated in replying, because after all, he was the Minister of Foreign Affairs, whom I talked to for the first time in my life, and furthermore, I was not sure how far I dared go in speaking my mind, but being induced by him to speak frankly, I finally decided to do so. I told him, that according to my conviction the war was already lost - and that we were in a desperate situation. I also told him, that it would have been still worse had Germany won the war, because we would have become slaves under the German yoke for centuries.

WITH RIBBENTROP IN MILAN

Count Ciano approved vivaciously. He said: "It is exactly as You say. It is a terrible thing to have the Germans as enemies, but still worse to have them as allies. They fight like lions, but they understand nothing - and just because they do not understand, they ruin themselves as well as those bound to them. They imagine certain things and act accordingly and stubbornly refuse to believe or admit..."

or admit that things are different, even if they can touch them with their own hands. When Ribbentrop went to London as Ambassador, von Neurath, who at that time was Foreign Minister, surprised me with a dull-witted joke. He said: 'Von Ribbentrop will experience for himself that it is easier to receive a "yes" when one goes to London as a representative introducing a new mark of champagne, than when going there as Ambassador to Germany.' In fact, Ribbentrop experienced it. And after that he wanted to punish England; punish it because she had not said "yes" to his demands, had not accepted the Nazi greeting. In fact, he wished to punish, because things were not as he had thought them to be - and consequently did not work out the way he had imagined."

I was very much surprised at Count Ciano's frankness of speech and I told him so. I even advised him to be more careful. But he told me, that he was in the habit of speaking his mind openly. "Furthermore - whom would it hurt? Mussolini?" And at these words he shrugged his shoulders. "To the Germans? But the Germans owed him gratitude. I have given them the best of advice. I told them: 'Do not start the war! Do not start it, because You will lose it and ruin yourselves altogether.' The facts have proved that I was right in what I predicted. So they ought to pay me homage." "Homage"- I said -"no, on the contrary, they will never forgive You. The beaten man never forgives the one that gave him the good advice that would have saved him; never forgives the one, who on every occasion can say: "I told You so!" "It is true", he replied -"but after all, they can do what they please to me. I want to say what I think." He then turned to me with a question "But do they know...

know how I think outside?" At that moment I realized that the public might be informed of his anti-German attitude. I replied "yes, they know a little." "And what is the public opinion?" I shrugged my shoulders and replied "Well, they say it is alright, but, there is the iron-pact?" His face darkened as he said "Ah! in regard to that, they will one day find out how it was concluded." I replied that I might already know, or believed that I knew. He responded that he was curious to know if it were true and I then proposed to relate that which I knew, and if I were wrong, he should please correct me. He accepted and I started my version of the pact:

"You left for Milan to meet Ribbentrop. Up to that moment no pact had ever been mentioned between Italy and Germany. There was an agreement between You and Mussolini, that it would be worth while siding with Germany and use it as a valuable playcard in the game with England, but You never had the intention of letting things go too far, but to keep things within a certain limit." Ciano followed my story with growing surprise. As I made a pause, he exclaimed "Exactly, so it was!" "You had hardly arrived in Milan and scarcely communicated with Ribbentrop when You were called to the telephone. It was Rome calling. Over the wire came the voice of Mussolini. He said: 'Offer them a military alliance.' You remained speechless. Then You tried to object, but Mussolini insisted, 'I have told you to offer Ribbentrop a military alliance.' And then You asked to have the main paragraphs of the proposed pact dictated. And - in fact - there were three paragraphs -

the most...

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the most important. Once more Count Ciano interrupted me with the words "Just exactly, so it happened". "Then You proposed the agreement to Ribbentrop, and the former seemed just as surprised at Your request, as You were, when You received the order from Mussolini. He asked You for a couple of days time, to be able to get in contact with Hitler and to have his instructions. In one way or another he had to justify his prolonged stay in Milan, and therefore let himself be ciceroned around the city - churches and monuments for three days. "No", corrected Count Ciano - "two days - this, being the only mistake made in Your otherwise exact version." "But it is of small importance," I said. "After two days the instructions came - and the iron-pact was signed. Am I right?" "Very right" replied Ciano. "Strange how precisely these things are known."

MUSSOLINI'S SPEECH

After having finished the story of the iron-pact, we turned to other topics. All of a sudden Count Ciano made a new inquiry. "What impression did You have of Mussolini's speech?" I hesitated. To gain a few moment's time for reflection, I replied "How shall I answer You? As one answers an old Café friend?" "If I ask, it is because I wish to know the truth." "Well," I replied resolutely, "very bad". "Is it Your personal impression, or that of others?" "It is my personal impression as well as that of all people with good sense, that I since then have talked to." "And why?" "I could mention a hundred reasons. I will begin with the most insignificant of all, so insignificant, that it seems almost ridiculous. For instance "The smoking-suit at five" and I will close with the more serious one, the advice to the

Italian...

Italian population to move away from the larger centers. Just as if the poor Italians were rich tourists, all of which possessed villas outside Milan and Turin." I had not chosen this argument by mere chance, as I had a presentiment, that there was a rift between my listener and Mussolini. And in fact, as I cited "smoking at five" Ciano's face lightened up in a large understanding smile. But when I mentioned the Mussolini advice to move away from the large cities, he interrupted me at once. "Not only that!" he cried, but the government does nothing. They advise the Italians to move out of Milan, Turin and Genoa, they advise hundreds of thousands, maybe millions, and what does the government do? Not one single thing to prepare lodgings for all these people, not one single preparation to assist them in any way. They give an advice - and then they wash their hands. And that is not all. Mussolini says, that the Italian soldiers are good, if they are well commanded and well armed, fine! And who has the responsibility of commanding them well? Who is the one to arm them well?" I looked at him in great surprise. Then I said "I wish to give You an advice. Please do not talk that way in the future, because You will have trouble." He shrugged his shoulders. "From Mussolini I have nothing to fear." Tragic ingenuity.

WHY MUSSOLINI HATED HITLER

III

The conversation turned once more to the Germans. As it is over a year and a half since this private talk took place - and being that it was a very long one, I cannot possibly remember everything that was said, or the different turns of the conversation, nor why and how we came to pass

from...

from one subject to another. I am trying to be as exact as possible in relating the topics discussed by the Count and myself.

Count Ciano spoke of the Germans with a deeply-rooted hatred. We remember his speech of the 16th Dec. 1939, where the hostility of the Fascist foreign politics keenly proved to be anti-German. He said, that at the time the reception rooms of his Foreign Ministry were thronged with visitors, but as soon as the rumour was spread of his disagreement with Mussolini, they were quickly abandoned and the visitors disappeared. I remarked "If You had gone to the German Embassy, You would have found them there. They only changed waiting-rooms." He answered "Yes, that is probable."

An absurd situation

I asked Count Ciano, if I must consider myself bound to keep secret what he had confided to me. He hesitated a little before he replied "Well - it would not hurt them to know my opinion of the Germans, or what do You say?" He cherished the thought that his anti-German sentiments had, or would procure him a certain popularity. I was cruel enough to tell him, that he had better tear himself from any illusions of that kind. I asked him "Why don't You ask for Your dismissal?" Once more his face darkened. He replied "I wanted to do so. Indeed, I had already decided, if one can term it so. When we entered the war, You will remember that I enrolled. My idea was this - as a country engaged in a very serious war could not get along without a Foreign Minister, I could not just leave after a week's notice, but they would have to substitute me. In this way, I would have reached my goal, which was to leave the government

without...

without slamming the door behind me. But the war with France ended all of a sudden and my calculations blew up like soap-bubbles. I was called back for the Armistice negotiations - and once more I was caught. "But" I said, "if I understand right, You were already long aware of the great danger that the Hitlerian Germany would be to Italy and for Europe." "I have always regarded German politics with seeing eyes. I have always understood that Germany marched boldly towards war and that we were a playcard in their game; a card that would be sacrificed at the first opportunity. And if I had not come to understand it by myself, if I had not seen with my own eyes - Attolico would have made me see." "The Ambassador to Berlin, does he see clearly?" "He always did. His reports were a constant cry of alarm. It can be said, that he had hardly arrived in Berlin, before he knew, before he understood that Germany wanted war and was prepared for it - and would to any cost force the outbreak of that war."

When he later on read a part of his diary to me, these same words met me from the pages, but it also occurred, that while Attolico called our attention with alarming cries, the Counselor to the Embassy in Berlin, Magistrati, brother-in-law of the Minister, wrote optimistic and tranquilizing letters, as to the German situation and Nazi politics. "You see," I said, "that sometimes our Ambassadors are worth a little more than the journalists." "But tell me, if he were such a good Ambassador, why must he leave? Maybe just for that reason: of being a good Ambassador?" He refused to answer my question.

Alfieri appointed Ambassador

I will now make an extensive parenthesis. Later when
Count...

Count Ciano invited me to his house to read me the diary, I was to know the true course of things. Under a certain date, following notification was read: "In the car Mackensen informed in a confidential manner, that Attolico was not liked in Berlin and that we would have to call him back. He made me understand that there were two acceptable names on the list. These were Farinacci and Alfieri. As I listened to the reading of this passage, I observed: "so - the Italian Ambassador to Berlin was practically chosen by the German Government". Ciano replied with a vague nod, which could be quoted as: "As You see, so it was". I could not help smiling, "And thus Alfieri was appointed Ambassador to Berlin?" "Un jeune homme très gentil, complètement dépourvu d'intelligence." This was the definition made by Miss Fontanges, the adventuress with whom Mussolini had had a ridiculous adventure. Count Ciano smiled, "What choice have You? From two evils, You choose the least bad." I once more asked, "And did not Mackensen assign also Anfuso?" "No he did not. Anfuso had always been considered pro-German, but Mackensen did not assign him." "Always pro-German" I replied surprised. "But how is that? I have a literary friend with whom he always has anti-German disputes." "Yes, I know," said Count Ciano. "You mean a certain Sicilian novelist, but in spite of this, he has always been pro-German." I remained speechless. Count Ciano's reply pointed to two small puzzles, of which one was a little difficult to solve, and the other almost impossible. The first was: the Sicilian Novelist, Vitaliano Brancati, well - there was Anfuso, who for years had made anti-German debates with Brancati - who happened to be an old friend of his, from his earliest youth...

youth - and - who in reality, was pro-German? It seemed more than strange. The second mystery: Anfuso made anti-German debates with Brancati and Count Ciano was well informed as to this. I realized that, when he made the comment "Yes, that Sicilian Novelist," But by whom was he so well informed? Evidently by Anfuso himself. Strange! And why? For what reason? I must confess that I could not solve this mystery. And for this reason, I close this extended paranthesis and continue my conversation with Count Ciano.

Senseless words

At a prolonged pause, I inquired "Why do You not write down Your memories? You have partaken of and assisted at such strange and important happenings, that it could be considered Your duty to make them known." Once more a large, understanding smile brightened up his face as he replied: "It is already done." He rose and went to a small safe, which was near the window. He took out a large note-book bound in black. I noticed that there were several of the same kind, but he only took forth one. Closing the safe, he returned to his seat and laid the book on the table. "It is my diary", he said. He was still smiling and seemed pleased. "Years back I started writing down the important things that happened during the day." He opened the book. It was written with a clear, upright handwriting. No cancelations were to be seen. Here and there extra pages were folded and attached. I complimented him for the neatness with which it was written. There was a note of vanity in his voice as he replied: "You know, I was once a journalist." Then he added

jokingly...

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jokingly: "Do You believe me, when I say, that if things should go wrong for me, I could sell this to any foreign country and receive enough for it, to be able to live." "Doubtless - I said - but meanwhile You could read some of it to me." He looked smilingly at me and vivaciously exclaimed "Just to You! No, never, never." "Why do You say 'Just to You,' why not read it to me as well as to somebody else?" He continued saying no to my requests, but all the time I knew that he had a great desire to read me something. The book lay open on the table. "You have asked me what Mussolini thinks of the Germans." Indeed, I did not recall having asked a similar question, but replied either yes or no. I quietly waited for him to begin. "Well, just see what happened to come under my eyes: the news had been transmitted that the German troupes had entered Rumania," he began reading from the open page of the diary. "Mussolini called me to the Venezian Palace. He was enraged. He cried out: 'once more Germany has played one of its plotted tricks. But, next time Hitler opens the newspapers, he will read that I have attacked Greece.' He was silent for a moment, then he let his fist drop down on the table and cried 'Corfu'." I burst out laughing. I could picture the scene; I saw the man, who had dreamt that he dominated his ally, suddenly wake up and find himself his slave. Above all, I saw him furiously pounding the table with his fist, crying out "Corfu". "But why Corfu?" I demanded. "He had many good reasons for being angry with the Germans. Why should he just choose Corfu? for which he was indebted to the English. Revenge the death of Traiano. Moreover King Carlo..."

Carlo, Roman Emperor. "You criticize too much"- said Count Ciano smilingly - and I will not read You any more." And with these words he closed the diary. I insisted that he read me some other part, but it was in vain. "As You wish"- I said - "but one day You will read it all to me." These words slipped over my lips.

CHINESE AND JAPANESE

We also discussed the Orient. Count Ciano had been in China for quite some time and had a profound knowledge of the Chinese people. He spoke of them with great sympathy. He boasted of being the first one to realize that the Chinese would have become good soldiers. He learned this by watching the Shanghai police - which - as we know - is mixed: one part being Chinese and the other European and Japanese. He considered the Chinese police to be the best of all. It was the Japanese, who with their brutality and bestial cruelty had forced these peaceful people to become warriors, but Count Ciano was convinced that the Japanese would never succeed in breaking the Chinese resistance. They could never go through with an occupation of the vast Chinese territory. They would only be able to cast forth their expedition corpse. When the Japanese ^{columns} arrived, they set fire to a few houses, destroyed some villages - then passed, without leaving other traces behind them than a couple of hundred of graves. And the war spread around the country like fire. It could be likened to a ship that cleaves the water: the sea opens up - and immediately closes - no trace is left. While he was talking, I could not help thinking of the unhappy
destiny...

destiny of that man, who had given up in everything, who acted contradictory to his own feelings and opinions.

Later - as I walked downstairs from the Chigi Palace, I asked myself why Ciano had told me all these things, and I arrived at the conclusion, that some was said because he wished to tell it - and furthermore, wished to make a good impression upon me, whom he considered an intellectual with a certain standing, and at last, maybe for the craving of just speaking to somebody. And I thought to myself: Maybe I will be able to print it all - one day.

PORFIRIO